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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
Scheduled for March 26 and 27, 2001

Under the provisions of G.L. Ch. 30A and pursuant to the authority found in G.L. Ch. 130 ss. 17A, 80, and 104, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) have scheduled hearings on the following proposals. Contact the Division of Marine Fisheries for draft regulations and further details.

1. DMF PROPOSAL TO AMEND HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT (322 CMR 6.34) ESTABLISHING DISTINCT PERMIT CATEGORIES AND DEALER RULES FOR CRAB HARVEST DESTINED FOR BIOMEDICAL VS. BAIT PURPOSES.
2. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO FURTHER RESTRICT HORSESHOE CRAB HARVEST. THE PETITION CALLS FOR A NUMBER OF CHANGES INCLUDING:
 - DURING MAY-JULY, PROHIBIT NIGHT-TIME HARVEST AND PROHIBIT HARVEST FOR BAIT PURPOSES DURING THE 96-HOUR PERIODS AROUND NEW AND FULL MOONS;
 - A CAP ON LICENSES TO HARVEST CRABS;
 - REQUIRE CONCH FISHERMEN USING CRABS AS BAIT TO QUARTER THE CRABS AND USE BAIT BAGS;
 - REQUIRE ALL CRABS USED IN THE LYSATE INDUSTRY TO BE RETURNED TO THE WATERS WITHIN TOWN BOUNDARIES THEY WERE HARVESTED.
3. DMF PROPOSAL TO AMEND TRAP TAG REGULATIONS (322 CMR 6.31) TO AMEND THE DEADLINE FOR PLACING CURRENT YEAR'S TAGS ON THE TRAP. THE CURRENT DEADLINE OF MARCH 1 WOULD BE CHANGED TO MAY 1.
4. DMF PROPOSAL TO AMEND BLACK SEA BASS RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS (322 CMR 6.28) TO COMPLY WITH THE INTERSTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN. SIZE LIMIT AND BAG LIMIT WOULD BE UNCHANGED BUT THE FISHERY WOULD BE CLOSED IN THE EARLY SPRING WITH A MAY 10 OPENING DATE.
5. DMF PROPOSAL TO ALLOCATE THE ASMFC-APPROVED 794,100 LBS. FLUKE (SUMMER FLOUNDER) COMMERCIAL QUOTA IN 2001 BETWEEN NET GEAR (85%) AND HOOK GEAR (15%) (322 CMR 6.22). TO ADMINISTER THESE GEAR-TYPE QUOTAS, DMF COULD ESTABLISH SEPARATE, CONSECUTIVE (NON-OVERLAPPING) OPEN SEASONS FOR EACH GEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NET FISHERY COULD OPEN ON JUNE 15 AND CLOSE WHEN THE NET-QUOTA IS TAKEN; THE HOOK FISHERY THEN COULD OPEN UNTIL THE HOOK-QUOTA IS REACHED.
6. DMF PROPOSAL TO AMEND SCUP RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS (322 CMR 6.28) TO COMPLY WITH THE ASMFC MANAGEMENT PLAN'S MANDATE TO REDUCE HARVEST BY 33%.

An Agency of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement
David M. Peter, Commissioner

THREE OPTIONS ARE PROPOSED:

- (a) **SIZE LIMIT OPTION:** INCREASE THE MINIMUM SIZE FROM 9" TO 10" FOR ALL RECREATIONAL ANGLERS AND MAINTAIN CERTAIN RULES ON BAG LIMITS: 25 FISH PER ANGLER AND 100 FISH PER VESSEL BAG LIMIT FOR PRIVATE BOATERS AND SHORE FISHERMEN. A 75-FISH PER PERSON BAG LIMIT IS PROPOSED FOR ANGLERS ABOARD PARTY AND CHARTER VESSELS;
 - (b) **SEASON CLOSURE OPTION:** MAINTAIN THE 9" MINIMUM SIZE AND ADOPT ALL CURRENT BAG LIMIT RULES AS LISTED ABOVE IN (A) BUT CLOSE THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY DURING OCTOBER 7-DECEMBER 31;
 - (c) **POSSESSION LIMIT OPTION:** MAINTAIN THE 9" MINIMUM SIZE WITH NO CLOSED SEASON BUT REDUCE THE BAG LIMIT FROM 25 TO 12 FISH FOR ALL INCLUDING THOSE ON PARTY/CHARTER VESSELS.
- 7. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO FURTHER RESTRICT TRAWLING FOR SQUID OUT TO 1/2 MILE FROM SHORE OFF THE FALMOUTH SHORELINE IN VINEYARD SOUND TO PROTECT BAY SCALLOPS AND EEL GRASS HABITAT.
 - 8. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL FLUKE LANDINGS DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS DURING THE DIRECTED FISHERY SEASON. THE DIRECTED FISHERY SEASON CURRENTLY BEGINS JULY 5. MFC WILL ACCEPT COMMENTS ON ANY OTHER CHOICES OF NO-FISHING DAYS.
 - 9. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENTS ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO INCREASE THE WEAKFISH MINIMUM SIZE FROM 16" TO 18" AND ENACT A RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT (322 CMR 8.06) OF 12 FISH.
 - 10. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO ESTABLISH NEW REGULATIONS ON THE RECREATIONAL HARVEST OF WHITE PERCH INCLUDING A 25 FISH BAG LIMIT AND AN 8" MINIMUM SIZE.
 - 11. ACCEPT PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PUBLIC PETITION TO AMEND SURF CLAM REGULATIONS (322 CMR 6.08) TO ALLOW COMMERCIAL HAND-RAKING OF SURF CLAMS IN THOSE WATERS CLOSED TO DREDGING YET NOT ACCESSIBLE TO RECREATIONAL HARVESTERS.

TWO HEARINGS HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED:

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 (7-11 P.M.) AT MASS MARITIME ACADEMY AUDITORIUM ON BUZZARDS BAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2001 (2-5 P.M.) AT THE KATHERINE CORNELL THEATRE IN TISBURY (MARTHA'S VINEYARD).

WRITTEN COMMENTS (BY MAIL OR FAX) WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 5 PM ON FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2001.